

# Tips on parenting Teens

Many people believe that once their children become teenagers that their work as parents is done. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Yes, teenagers are embarking on independence but they need their parents more than ever to offer guidance and to help them make good choices.

Teenagers today are faced with some serious and potentially dangerous pressures from their peers. Drugs, sex, alcohol, and gangs are all competing for your teenager's attention. Here are some guidelines that you may find helpful.

1. **Keep communication lines open.** Although some subjects may be difficult to talk about, force yourself to talk about them anyway. Let your young person know that they can share anything with you without you getting angry. Assure them that you'll love them no matter what.
2. **Have clear expectations and be consistent with follow up and consequences.** Some parents have found contracts between themselves and their teenager helpful. Others merely make the rules and consequences clear. Whatever your choice, make sure your teenager has boundaries. ***Things like curfew, dating, having friends over, driving, drugs and alcohol should be spelled out and rules enforced.*** And for our growing population of tech savvy youth it's important to also have a conversation about appropriate Internet and cell phone use.
3. **Build your child's self esteem by discovering your child's talents and abilities and keeping them involved in those interests.** Everyone is good at something and the more skills a child develops — the better they feel about themselves. Keep them busy in healthy activities and they'll have little time for negative influences.

These parenting tips are a courtesy of  
Franklin County Children Services' Communications Division.

#### For information about:

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